

March 24, 2011

The Honorable John Walsh
Chairman, Michigan House Judiciary Committee
124 N. Capitol Ave.
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Representative Walsh and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am contacting you regarding my opposition to House Bill (HB) 4349. The increase in abuse of forfeiture laws by law enforcement agencies throughout the state should serve as a bellwether for the committee when considering HB 4349.

I am a duty disabled retired Detroit Police Officer and former Marine. Over the last decade I have observed law enforcement officers across the state routinely getting caught stealing money, drugs, cars and numerous other things. In the last month alone officers from the Michigan State Police have been arrested and charged with doing most of the above. We also have officers from the Inkster Police Department facing jail time for their role in a drug investigation that was initiated in part by the belief that the defendant/s had considerable assets to forfeit.

There has also been numerous shootings of citizens during botched or illegal raids that are forfeiture driven. Add the fabricated evidence that is often-times used as the basis for the warrant and you have tax payer funded criminal enterprises run by law enforcement officers. Forfeiture laws appear to encourage criminal behavior by those we trust to uphold the law.

The inherent danger that the actions cited above pose to the ordinary uniformed police officer cannot be ignored. Aside from losing our credibility we are often-times looked upon as part of the problem - thugs with badges. As the public observes law enforcement officers routinely violate the law they lose both respect and trust for law enforcement. Police/community trust is necessary for any police department to properly perform their duties. My professional opinion is that HB 4349 would further erode that trust.

Respectfully -



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